

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

We claim:

Claim 1 (currently amended): A process for the continuous preparation of THF ~~by comprising~~ reaction of a 1,4-butanediol-containing reaction mixture over a heteropolyacid catalyst which has not been predried, wherein the reaction mixture comprises less than 1 ppm of basic nitrogen components and 2-(4-hydroxybutoxy)tetrahydrofuran.

Claim 2 (currently amended): ~~A process as claimed in~~ The process according to claim 1, wherein the reaction mixture comprises at least one component selected from the group consisting of polytetrahydrofuran, and/or its monoacetates of polytetrahydrofuran, and of or diacetates of polytetrahydrofuran.

Claim 3 (currently amended): ~~A process as claimed in either of claims 1 and 2~~ The process according to claim 1, wherein less than 1% by weight of heteropolyacid, based on the reaction mixture, is added.

Claim 4 (currently amended): ~~A process as claimed in any of claims 1 to 3~~ The process according to claim 1, wherein the reaction is carried out at from 80 to 300°C.

Claim 5 (currently amended): ~~A process as claimed in any of claims 1 to 4~~ The process according to claim 1, wherein the reaction is carried out in a pressure range from 0.5 to 10 bar.

Claim 6 (currently amended): ~~A process as claimed in any of claims 1 to 5~~ The process according to claim 1, wherein the reaction mixture is passed over a cation exchanger after the activity decreases.

Claim 7 (new): The process according to claim 2, wherein less than 1% by weight of heteropolyacid, based on the reaction mixture, is added.

Claim 8 (new): The process according to claim 2, wherein the reaction is carried out at from 80 to 300°C.

Claim 9 (new): The process according to claim 3, wherein the reaction is carried out at from 80 to 300°C.

Claim 10 (new): The process according to claim 2, wherein the reaction is carried out in a pressure range from 0.5 to 10 bar.

Claim 11 (new): The process according to claim 3, wherein the reaction is carried out in a pressure range from 0.5 to 10 bar.

Claim 12 (new): The process according to claim 4, wherein the reaction is carried out in a pressure range from 0.5 to 10 bar.

Claim 13 (new): The process according to claim 2, wherein the reaction mixture is passed over a cation exchanger after the activity decreases.

Claim 14 (new): The process according to claim 3, wherein the reaction mixture is passed over a cation exchanger after the activity decreases.

Claim 15 (new): The process according to claim 4, wherein the reaction mixture is passed over a cation exchanger after the activity decreases.

Claim 16 (new): The process according to claim 5, wherein the reaction mixture is passed over a cation exchanger after the activity decreases.